

**EDWIN LONDON**  
**Auricles Apertures Ventricles**

**New World Records 80477**

Writing about one's self and work is a sort of Comedy of Mirrors--reflections on cerebral surfaces that one can occasionally conjure up for amusement on long car trips; perhaps even an entertainment in the guise of apologia specially ordered to demystify the ineffable impenetrable autobiography lodged within us all. Fun house (ha ha ha) distortions for laughs, or maddening cases of horrific (oh my God) recollection emit an aroma, be it tasteless and/or delectable, in Remembrance of Things Pasta. An apothegm may slyly indicate the writer to be only half serious; it obscures the totality of the tableau when unannounced its tone turns blue. Well, that is fair enough if the same rules apply to others who may be similarly self-absorbed. Or is it? Let name-drop testimony be offered from some passive collaborators such as Shakespeare & Co., Isaiah and Job, Sophocles and Lincoln, to allay any suspicion that it's all for yuks. One wonders what *they* would say if asked? The actor's mask curls lips in all directions up and down. Tragi-comedy emphasizes the sublime, but feeds a variegated catharsis to the spiritually needy; commie-tragedy, on the other hand, is earthbound and in the long run provides less sustenance, as illustrated by the rust-out of the Marx Brothers' opera apparatus. One senses that music is MUSIC; but is talk (TALK?), one truly wants to know, useful and elevated, too? Do music and talk about it meaningfully intersect anywhere?

There are composers who try to avoid superficial and self-conscious labels relating to "personal style" in an attempt *to forget*, at least in terms of specialized procedures and musical vocabulary, how their most recently *completed* composition was written. This is done, perhaps, to allow one freely to accept or reject tantalizing technical and/or scholarly methodologies of recent vintage, as well as to enjoy the luxury of exploring what might be termed newfound and pertinent subjective elements. These varying "filamentules" may have the enticing capability of suggesting effective and different contextual solutions, e.g., the hows and whys (to whitt, howls 'n' wise deep between "them there" owl's eyes), for the *next* piece. Yet the question remains: is it truly possible to tranquilize memory so completely without being counterproductive? "Why no, boy; nothing can be made out of nothing."

Many artists do not, ordinarily, care for the descriptive label "eclectic" to be applied to their work, with its implication of stylistic shopping around and indecorous feeding at the trough of others' creations. Yet there appears to be some positive use (despite the outraged disdain that one displays when being tagged as such) of the term in accounting for the plenitude of stylistic vagaries drifting through one's output. Music that is implanted and securely lodged in the brain flows (either naturally or compulsively) through the inner ear and out, via the humdrum air guitar of vegetative factuality and can not be easily ignored, omitted or forgotten. Is this incipient madness or simply de rigueur musical hyperactivity?

The three extended works heard on this disc were composed in sequence during the years 1983-85. Is there a compelling connective thread that joins them in logical progression? The desire to say yes is very appealing. There are too many times, though, when the composer is the last to know. The would-be articulate artist finds the confrontation between reason's intent and the visceral reality of the actual work to be taxing. *Muss es sein?* Let's not get involved with that one. A cordial invitation to embrace silence on matters of explication and justification is tempting. Nevertheless . . .

A solo soprano, with alto flute and harpsichord as partners, sings a fragmented ordering of Shakespeare's Sonnet No. 30 as a departure point in *Sonnet Haiku* (1983). The Hebrew Bible provides analects for sixteen solo singers in *Auricles Apertures Ventracles* (1984). Though not a sung word is heard, *In Heinrich's Shoes* (1985) is an orchestral fantasy closely bound to the discursive progress of New Testament extracts from the Passion According to Saint John. The most obvious observation to be made about all this might be a comment about the composer's logomania - "*Do geese see God?*" How could they not? The targeted texts are in the metaphysical public domain, quite well known at least in their elevated use of a widely shared deep-rooted literary language and they offer the straphanger/listener an opportunity, perhaps illusory, of conceptual safe conduct through the traffic jam of present day musical discourse.

*Sonnet Haiku* is concerned with explicitly veiled transformation of one formal poetic structure into another through the dismantling and reassembly of text. The sonnets of Shakespeare are well known, and apparently, one chooses to believe, virtually indestructible. In *Sonnet Haiku*, Sonnet No. 30 is used as a catalyst in the shaping of a series of haiku-like musical structures. This makes it possible to void their taken-for-granted appearance in a continuing referential and reverential trial: a sometimes serene, otherwise agitated, search for identity. The process is undertaken, among other reasons, in hope of achieving a stretched universality. Specific works are isolated, in most instances, into subgroups of constituent speech parts. Articles, prepositions, adverbs, nouns, verbs, and so forth are maintained in the discrete original temporal order that Shakespeare offers, and suggest a "deconstructed" reading (if that fatigued code phrase can possibly have any usefulness in context) of the original. Even though the discursive order of the music is strongly suggested by the choices as printed in the score, it is not inconceivable (despite the composer's longstanding and ingrained identification with the orientation of "Western" architectonic procedures) that the performance may begin at the pleasure of the performers anywhere in the score: The performance is done when one complete cycle has been offered. No attempt is made to invoke Japanese atmosphere in any consistent way, but there are casual allusions. *Sonnet Haiku* was commissioned by the Trio Bariano.

Shakespeare Sonnet No. 30 original version

*When to the sessions of sweet silent thought  
I summon up remembrance of things past  
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,  
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste:  
Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow,  
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,  
And weep afresh love's long since cancel'd woe,  
And moan the expense of many a vanish'd sight:  
Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,  
And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er  
The sad account of fore-bemoaned moan,  
Which I new pay as if not paid before,  
But if the while I think on thee dear friend,  
All losses are restored and sorrows end.*

Shakespeare Sonnet No. 30 reordered

A Instrumental Prologue

B *When to the up of the of a and with  
then an to for in and*

C *Since and the of a then at and from to o'er the  
of which as if not*

D *Before but if the while on all and*

E Instrumental interlude

*Sessions thought remembrance things lack thing woes  
time's waste eye friends death's night loves*

G *Woe expense sight grievances  
woe woe account moan friend losses sorrow*

H *I I many I my I I I thee*

I Instrumental interlude

J *Sweet silent past old new dear unused  
precious dateless afresh long*

K *Cancel'd vanish'd foregone  
heavily sad fore-bemoaned new dear restored*

L *Summon sigh sought  
Wail can drown  
Flow hid weep  
Moan can grieve  
Tell pay paid*

M *think are end*

*Auricles Apertures Ventricles* was originally subtitled "a short symphony for sixteen unaccompanied voices." The purpose of that, one may now suppose, was to make a choral/vocal piece whose formal modus was akin to pure and rigorous symphonic structure rather than the differently motivated discursive progression normally presented by text. There is by now, enough time having passed for more rational observation, a certainty that it is not, whatever else one may say to describe it, a symphony--short or extended! The power of the text to demand obeisance to its full range of suggestive imagery, from soft-spoken meditative prayers through impassioned wails to a full-scale battle ("the sound of trumpet, the alarm of war") for control of the psyche/soma simply took over. *Es muss sein. . . .*

The singers change positions several times during the performance of *Auricles Apertures Ventricles*,

displaying different configurations in various movements. In effect, the larger group of sixteen is subdivided into four choruses. The introduction and Movement I call for four different SATB groups to be as acoustically far apart as prudent performance circumstance may allow, possibly in the round. The work is sung in Hebrew; here follows a translation.

INTRODUCTION *Blessed art Thou.*

MOVEMENT I: *For the ear beareth words, as the palate tasteth food. --Job 34:3*

SATB Chorus I

SATB Chorus II      conductor      SATB Chorus III

SATB Chorus IV

The final chord herein is pitch material from which chanting takes place. This covers the move to the next position.

The Interlude and Movement II have the four groups distributed as

SSSS      AAAA      TTTT      BBBB

removed from each other but in a proscenium setup.

INTERLUDE: *Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard that the everlasting God, the Lord, the creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of His understanding. --Isaiah 40:28*

MOVEMENT II: *Blessed art Thou O Lord, our God, King of the Universe --Book of Prayer*

Movement III blends all the choruses into one conventionally distributed chorus

MOVEMENT III: *S      A      T      B  
Blessed art Thou O Lord, our God, King of the Universe, who has formed man in wisdom, and created in him many orifices and vessels. It is revealed that if one of these be opened or one of these be closed, it would be impossible to exist and to stand before Thee. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, Who beaeth all flesh and does wondrously. --Morning service Book of Prayer*

Movement IV is performed in the reverse position of Movement II

BBBB      TTTT      AAAA      SSSS

MOVEMENT IV: *My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard O, my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the*

*alarm of war.* --Jeremiah 4:19

Movement V is performed similarly to the placement at the beginning, but in the reverse order of chorus placement

MOVEMENT V: *Better is a handful with quietness, than both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit.* --Ecclesiastes 4:6

SATB Chorus IV

SATB Chorus III     conductor     SATB Chorus II

SATB Chorus I

*Auricles Apertures Ventricles* was composed in memory of the composer's mother, Nettie Segal London (1900-1950). It was written for The Gregg Smith Singers.

Giants of German music--Bach, Handel, Berg, and Schutz--were born in years that end in 85. To think that their music has survived the vicissitudes (pestilence, plague, famine, 100-year wars, nuclear nervousness--not to think of generational taste and tone shift) is a remarkable testimonial to the indomitable human qualities that inhabit the artwork of these past masters. May they live to be 1000 x 1000.

The stream wants its flow continued. What better way to commemorate than to renew the old? How? Why, through "making music out of music" in a time-hallowed practice appreciated, it is evident, by the composers represented on the '85 birth list. Bach and Handel made assumptions (thank God) about proprietary rights to music that enveloped their age, in a manner not at all consonant with today's copyright laws (God forgive them). Berg's sweet lyric *Tristan* had a captivating crypto-*Isolde*, of whom he evidently never said, "*Ich habe genug.*" There are many specimens of beguiling new music, suggested by and drawn from past models, which embrace the listener with engaged delight, arguing persuasively in favor of transcriptive processes involving older music. In enlightened usage, these "borrowings" manifestly make more possible a readily comprehensible music vocabulary available as interactive currency between composer, performer, and listener.

For me, I celebrate the living music of the past and present through respectful transmutation of copious passages (indeed, the *gontzeh megillab*) derived from the *Passion According to St. John* (1665-66) of Heinrich Schutz. This wonderful work (one of a set of three Passions written by Schutz in his old age) is described by his biographer H. J. Moser as being mystic and rhapsodic in its use of Phrygian-mode Psalm tones. It is quite unusual that the Schutz Passions, written amid the baroque period, eschew the use of continuo, or any instruments for that matter, and present the human voice unaccompanied, even in the recitatives.

A bizarre conceit growing out of the vagaries of "encyclopedic total cosmic history," a discipline developed in this age by a serious-minded Mel Brooks-like brain, considered the remote possibility that, as the eons race after one another, filtering out so many of the manifold human artifacts

refulgent of a given era (the burning of the library at Alexandria, the last stand of Custer, *la bomba atomica*, et al), the only way that Schutz's Passion might be remembered would come from a score of *In Heinrich's Shoes* somehow accidentally preserved in the rediscovered detritus dug out of a preceding age (the *Skolion of Seikolos*).

It may seem odd that I, who have composed so much music for chorus on Old Testament texts, would, when writing a strictly instrumental composition, choose to base it on a work inextricably associated with New Testament narratives and pure choral music. But the prodigious Passion as set by Schutz has offered much in the way of inspiration since I first heard it in 1952.

If the notion of "walking in Heinrich's shoes" seems a bit flippant, please forgive me. I undertake the trek in humility and with great regard for this well-traveled master. That there are conceptual mirrors reflecting identity probes and comments that still are matters for conjecture is apparent. Can music "discuss" these matters? Let's leave well enough alone.

*In Heinrich's Shoes* was written for the Cleveland Chamber Symphony.

—Edwin London

**Edwin London** was born in Philadelphia in 1929 and began his career as a French hornist, playing principal horn in the Orquesta Sinfonica de Venezuela and other ensembles, including the Oscar Pettiford Jazz Band. A graduate of Oberlin College, he received his doctorate from the University of Iowa, where he studied with P. G. Clapp and Philip Bezanson. He also studied with Luigi Dallapiccola, Darius Milhaud, and Gunther Schuller. He has taught at Smith College (1960-69) and the University of Illinois (1969-78), and since 1978 has been a professor at Cleveland State University.

A professional ensemble-in-residence at Cleveland State University, the **Cleveland Chamber Symphony** presents new music, along with neglected works by the musical greats of the past. Under music director Edwin London, the thirteen-year-old orchestra has made a commitment to new music by American composers. To date CCS has presented 91 world premieres. The Cleveland Chamber Symphony gives multiple performances of six to eight programs each season, bringing new music to concert venues across northeast Ohio as well as performing at its home base of CSU. Twice each season the orchestra plays special concerts of new music by young and emerging composers, giving these artists the opportunity to collaborate with a professional ensemble and to hear their work presented in a concert environment. The Cleveland Chamber Symphony has received national recognition, and has received the 1992 Laurel Leaf Award from the American Composers Alliance and the 1990 John S. Edwards Award for Creative Orchestral Programming.

**The Gregg Smith Singers**, a mixed voice company of 16, have been performing for over 30 years. The singers, who perform both contemporary and rarely done older music have received three Grammy Awards. At a Gregg Smith concert the singers move from stage to balcony to main floor, each piece performed in a different arrangement that Mr. Smith calls "multi-dimensional sound." The effect is live stereo music, surrounding the audience. The Gregg Smith Singers have made seven European tours and three visits to the Far East, singing at many music festivals, including the Salzburg, Edinburgh and Bergen Festivals. They have taken their diverse programs on twenty-five tours of the United States, and appeared in concert with Igor Stravinsky and Leopold Stokowski, as

well as the Los Angeles and New York Philharmonic Orchestras.

The members of **Trio Bariano** each pursue active solo careers and teach at Cleveland State University. Their repertory ranges from the music of the Baroque to works written specifically for the group, including works by Marcel Dick, Sydney Hodkinson, Edwin London, Rudy Shackelford, and German Caceres. **Noriko Fujii** (soprano) is a former Fulbright Scholar, and is a graduate of Toho Gakuen School of Music in Japan. She has performed frequently with the Saint Louis Symphony and other orchestras and ensembles throughout the Midwest, Europe, and Japan. **Barbara Peterson** (flute), a graduate of the Eastman School, has performed with the Cleveland Orchestra, the Buffalo and Rochester Philharmonics, and the Cleveland Opera. She is flutist with the Cleveland Chamber Symphony and the Coventry Chamber Players. **Janina Kuzma** (harpsichord), in addition to her study at the Krakow Conservatory, has received degrees from the Cleveland Institute of Music.

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- Better Is*. Smith College Chamber Singers; Iva Dee Hiatt, conductor. Ubres CF302.
- Day of Desolation*. University of Connecticut Concert Choir; John Poellein, conductor. Ubres CF302.
- Dream Thing on Biblical Episodes*. Smith College Chamber Singers; Edwin London, conductor. Ubres CF302.
- Portraits of Three American Ladies*. Marilyn Coles, soprano; Royal MacDonald, narrator; University of Illinois Contemporary Chamber Ensemble; Edwin London, conductor. Acoustic Research AR-0654.085.
- Psalm of These Days III*. University of Illinois Contemporary Chamber Players; Edwin London, conductor. CRI 405.
- Sacred Hair*. University of Illinois Concert Choir; Harold Decker, conductor. Ubres CF302.
- Sonatina, Viola and Piano. Ernst Wallfisch, viola; Lory Wallfisch, piano. Advance FGR-7.
- Two A' Marvell's For Words*. Philip Larson, bass-baritone; Cleveland Chamber Symphony; Edwin London, conductor. GM 2045.

Producer: Edwin London

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**AURICLES APERTURES VENTRICLES**

**THREE WORKS BY EDWIN LONDON (b. 1929) 80477-2**

- 1 *In Heinrich's Shoes*  
Cleveland Chamber Symphony
- 2 *Auricles Apertures Ventricles*  
The Gregg Smith Singers
- 3 *Sonnet Haiku*  
Trio Bariano

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NEW YORK, NY 10001-1820  
TEL 212.290-1680 FAX 212.290-1685**



Website: [www.newworldrecords.org](http://www.newworldrecords.org)  
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